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Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

6995th meeting
Wednesday, 10 July 2013, 10.15 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. DiCarlo	(United States of America)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Rattilo
	Australia	Ms. Hill
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Ms. Jiang Hua
	France	Mr. Araud
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Sana
	Togo	Mr. Kadangha-Bariki
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham

Agenda

Peace consolidation in West Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2013/384)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace consolidation in West Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2013/384)

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2013/384, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa.

I now give the floor to Mr. Djinnit.

Mr. Djinnit: I have the honour to introduce the eleventh report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), covering the period from 1 January to 30 June 2013 (S/2013/384). I will also seize this opportunity to update the Council on the most recent developments in the subregion.

Since my last briefing to the Security Council, on 25 January 2013 (see S/PV.6911), the West African subregion has continued to face multiple political and security challenges, including election-related tensions in a number of countries, transnational organized crime, piracy and terrorist activities cutting across the entire subregion. The humanitarian situation in the subregion continued to be characterized by food insecurity and malnutrition in the face of dwindling funding.

In addressing these challenges, the leaders of the subregion have continued to display great commitment in working collectively to enhance security and promote peace and stability within the framework of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other regional organizations, such as the Mano River Union (MRU). In addition to the commendable efforts made by ECOWAS and its leaders to address the crises in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, the regional organization has been promoting peaceful solutions to disputes among its member States. As a result, a number of border disputes between ECOWAS member States have been resolved or are being addressed through peaceful means.

On the situation in Mali, UNOWA has worked closely with ECOWAS, the United Nations Office in Mali and the defunct African-led International Support Mission in Mali, and subsequently with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), to promote political dialogue in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and with the outcome of the support and follow-up group meeting held in Bamako on 19 April. It was the combination of all these efforts and the collaborative work done under the leadership of President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso — with the support of President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria, the High Representative of the African Union, former President Pierre Buyoya, and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Koenders — that led to the signing, in Ouagadougou on 18 June, of the preliminary agreement on the presidential elections and inclusive peace talks in Mali. The agreement provides for a commitment on the part of the signatories to dialogue and negotiation as a means of resolving the conflict in the northern regions of Mali. It also provides for the presidential election to take place in July, to be followed by an inclusive political process for a comprehensive and durable settlement of the conflict.

Looking forward, UNOWA shall continue to lend its full support to MINUSMA and to the collective efforts to mobilize regional support for the stabilization of Mali. We will continue to extend similar support to the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau as it pursues its efforts to help stabilize Guinea-Bissau under the leadership of Special Representative of the Secretary-General José Ramos-Horta, in cooperation with ECOWAS, the African Union and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, building on the recent efforts towards inclusive governance and the holding of the presidential election.

In Guinea, an agreement was reached on 3 July between the parties, providing for a consensual election timetable for the holding of the legislative election in September. The agreement has thus paved the way for the holding of free, transparent and inclusive legislative elections that would allow, at last, all the energies of

the Government and the people of that country to be geared towards socioeconomic transformation and development.

I seize this occasion to thank the Security Council and the Guinea configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the African Union, ECOWAS, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the European Union and bilateral partners of Guinea, for the support they have extended to me and my colleagues, the national facilitators, in our efforts aimed at restoring dialogue and promoting an agreement between the parties.

However, funding is a major challenge to the timely implementation of the agreement. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to urge the bilateral and multilateral partners of Guinea to make financial contributions to assist the country in meeting the additional costs caused by the successive delays in the electoral timetable due to the lack of consensus on the electoral process and especially the recent delay generated by the agreement reached among the parties on 3 July. The agreement brought an end to months of differences between the presidential coalition and the opposition, and political tensions on issues related to the electoral process. In the context of the demonstrations organized by the opposition, serious incidents of violence erupted that led to a number of casualties, the destruction of property and loss of life that threatened social and national cohesion. We look forward to the outcome of the investigations that have been ordered by the Government as part of its commitment to the rule of law and the fight against impunity.

The positive outcome of the dialogue process in Guinea was welcomed with relief in the Mano River region, which remains fragile, as illustrated by the persistent tensions along the borders between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire and with other neighbouring countries. These transborder threats continue to undermine the stability and long-term development efforts of the countries of the Mano River Union, in spite of their great potential for economic development and growth.

In an effort to assist the region to address the challenges posed to their common security, UNOWA, in liaison with ECOWAS and the Mano River Union, convened in Dakar, on 29 June, a high-level meeting to launch the process of developing a security strategy for the Mano River Union, as requested by the Security Council. The meeting agreed that the strategy should aim at addressing cross-border threats to peace and stability in the Mano River region, and should be based on a comprehensive approach that takes into account the nexus between security and development, building on the existing initiatives in the region. It was decided to establish a steering committee composed of the three organizations that will spearhead the development of the strategy by the end of 2013. During the meeting, the Ministers from the four countries and their regional organizations, ECOWAS and the Mano River Union, demonstrated a strong commitment to joining their efforts to strengthen security and decided to own the process leading to the adoption of the proposed strategy.

(*spoke in French*)

Piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea are another regional threat to the security of West African countries. This phenomenon is negatively affecting international maritime trade in the area and has the potential to take a long-term toll on the economic development of coastal and landlocked countries. In order to address this increasing threat, the United Nations, through its Offices in West Africa and Central Africa, assisted the concerned regional organizations in convening a regional summit on piracy, as requested by the Security Council in its resolutions 2018 (2011) and 2039 (2012).

The resolve of the leaders of the region to establish a framework to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea was crystallized at the summit of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), ECOWAS and the Commission of the Gulf of Guinea, held on 24 and 25 June in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The summit adopted three key strategic documents: a code of conduct for the prevention and punishment of acts of piracy, armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime activity in Central and West Africa; a memorandum of understanding between ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Commission of the Gulf of Guinea on maritime security and safety in Central and West Africa; and, lastly, a political declaration. It was further agreed that ECCAS, ECOWAS, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the United Nations Office for West Africa, along with the Government of Cameroon, would work together to develop a programme of action on maritime security.

The third fragile zone in West Africa, besides the Mano River Union and the Gulf of Guinea, is the

Sahel, as the crisis in Mali has shown. The region has a significant number of vulnerability indicators, including environmental degradation, desertification, food insecurity, arms and drug trafficking and terrorism. That fragility underscores the urgency of the need for an integrated United Nations strategy for the Sahel aimed at complementing the efforts of the countries of the region and regional organizations to address the root causes of instability along the Sahel-Sahara belt and their consequences. That vision emerged clearly in the discussions with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, Mr. Prodi, whom I accompanied on joint visits to various countries in the subregion. The United Nations Regional Office for West Africa, which very early on launched efforts to promote a concerted United Nations approach to the Sahel, and which has subsequently played an important part, along with the other United Nations entities, in preparing the Sahel strategy, will naturally assume a share of the responsibility for implementing it.

Despite the commendable efforts of the ECOWAS leadership to respond to the challenges posed by transnational threats to peace and security, as manifested in the crises in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, those threats have nonetheless continued to spread through West Africa. In that regard, the ECOWAS summit's recent adoption of a counter-terrorism strategy and renewal of its regional plan of action against drug trafficking and organized crime are unquestionably encouraging developments that must now be translated into concrete action, with the support of the international community. The attacks on several places in Niger on 23 May made by the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, along with the continued activity of terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and Ansaru, emphasized yet again the complexity of the trans-border challenges posed by extremist groups and terrorist organizations in the subregion. Such groups take advantage of porous borders and the inadequate means and capacities of States in the subregion.

The widely condemned terrorist attack of 6 July on a school in Yobe state in Nigeria, which resulted in the deaths of 42 innocent people, including students, at a time when the state of emergency in that region is still in force, clearly demonstrates the terrorist groups' determination to spread terror and despair, and at the same time underscores the complexity of the problem. The avowed synergy between the terrorist groups operating in the subregion calls for concerted, region-wide action in order to deal with this threat. Such action should also address the underlying causes of instability, while, of course, taking into account the human rights aspects.

During my visit to Abuja on 10 and 11 June, I stressed how strongly the United Nations condemns the terrorist acts that have been perpetrated in Nigeria and our solidarity with its people and Government. I assured the authorities of the firm commitment and support of the United Nations for Nigeria's unity, stability and sovereignty, and expressed our willingness to increase our support for capacity-building in the areas of counter-terrorism, human rights and the management of disasters and humanitarian emergencies. I also encouraged them to continue to promote regional cooperation in addressing such transnational threats within the framework of existing regional and international counter-terrorism mechanisms.

The challenge posed by tensions related to elections and the negative impact arising from the lack of governance and regulation of security forces in some countries remain a source of concern in West Africa. Regarding electoral tensions, the United Nations Office for West Africa, together with the relevant country teams, continues to provide assistance through its good offices, aimed at creating conditions conducive to holding calm elections, as in the case of Guinea. In that regard, I should commend the efforts led by Bishop Barrigah in Togo, with the support of the Group of Five, aimed at facilitating a dialogue between the Togolese Government and the opposition in the run-up to the forthcoming legislature elections at the end of the month; in fact, I believe the date has been fixed for 25 July.

Moreover, the United Nations Office for West Africa continues to work closely with ECOWAS and the Mano River Union by supporting their efforts to develop regional frameworks aimed at supporting security sector reforms at the regional and national levels. In that regard, I should note that the process of security sector reform in Guinea has been making significant progress, supported by the United Nations and the personal involvement of President Alpha Condé. I should emphasize here that several other countries in the subregion are also working on security sector reform, particularly Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone.

Before concluding, I would like to call the Security Council's attention to the promising confidence-building process that the United Nations has been leading on the

issue of demarcating the boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria. Significant progress has been made in the boundary demarcation between the two countries and the follow-up process of the Greentree Agreement on the Bakassi peninsula will soon come to an end. In fact, in September the Greentree Agreement Follow-up Committee should hold its final meeting on the margins of the General Assembly right here in New York, where the Secretary-General and the Presidents of Cameroon and Nigeria launched the process in 2006.

West Africa, which more than ever stands at a crossroads in its quest for peace and security, deserves greater attention from the United Nations. In that regard, I am encouraged by the commitment shown by ECOWAS, under the leadership of its Chairman, President Alassane Outtara of Côte d'Ivoire, and the Chairman of the ECOWAS Commission, Ambassador Kadré Désiré Ouedraogo, to strengthening their architecture for peace and security, drawing lessons from the challenges that have been encountered in the regional response to the crisis in Mali. My colleagues of the United Nations Office for West Africa and I remain committed to building on the valuable partnership we have created with the other United Nations entities in the subregion, ECOWAS and other continental and regional organizations, including the African Union and the Mano River Union, with the aim of promoting and consolidating peace and stability in West Africa.

In that context, we will continue to encourage the dialogue process as the best way to settle conflicts and differences. We will also continue our efforts to mobilize international partnerships to tackle, through their support of regional and national stakeholders, the underlying causes of instability in the region, and to address the recent transnational threats in a concerted way. West African leaders and their regional institutions, particularly ECOWAS, know that they can continue to rely on the continued attention and support of the United Nations and its Security Council for their efforts to promote lasting peace, stability and development in the subregion.

The President: I thank Mr. Djinnit for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussions on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.